

**EdBlast! – ALL
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**This issue's message from Jim
New Superintendent seeks input from fellow South Carolinians**

I'm inviting all South Carolinians to join me as we begin the journey to support, reform, and improve our public schools. Nothing is more important to the future well-being of our children, our state, and our nation, which is dedicated to the fundamental proposition of opportunity for all.

I have been committed to public education for more than 35 years as a parent, teacher, coach, administrator, and college president. As your state superintendent, I will be focusing on a five-point plan for South Carolina's schools:

- Accelerate innovation;
- Increase public school choice;
- Refine accountability for maximum results with minimum testing;
- Elevate and reinvigorate our teaching profession; and
- Provide fair and more equitable funding.

Our aim is to move South Carolina's schools from incremental to dramatic progress, giving students both the skills and the knowledge to compete in America and around the globe. Our schools need your participation, persistence, and prayers. Together, we can build an innovative school system that produces the consistently excellent results we want, need, and deserve.

I hope that you take the time to share your advice about how to improve our public schools. To complete my survey, visit:

<http://www.jimrex.com/survey/>

Together, we can!

Jim

NEWS, OPPORTUNITIES, RESOURCES, AND AWARDS

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Rex begins first day as State Superintendent

Jim Rex, who took the oath of office Wednesday as South Carolina's 16th State Superintendent of Education, began his first full day on the job on Thursday by speaking to the employees of the agency he will direct. To read more, go to:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=723>

South Carolina National Board-Certified teachers™ climb beyond 5,000 mark

Another 636 South Carolina teachers have joined the ranks of those achieving National Board Certification, according to information released by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

For details, go to:

<http://dev.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=722>

http://www.nbpts.org/about_us/news_media/2006_score_release

School nurses recognized for service to public school students and staff members

Two school nurses have been recognized for their professionalism and service to South Carolina's public schools. To read more, go to:

<http://dev.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=722>

South Carolina recognizes 304 schools for outstanding academic performance

More than 300 public schools have earned cash awards recognizing high levels of academic achievement and high rates of student academic improvement.

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=721>

Eleven schools make School Improvement Council honor roll

Eleven schools have achieved School Improvement Council Honor Roll and will compete for the Dick and Tunky Riley School Improvement Award. Winners include: Chukker Creek Elementary School, Aiken County; J. Paul Truluck Middle School, Florence District Three; Pineview Elementary, Lexington District Two; Bradley Elementary, Richland One; E.L. Wright Middle, Richland Two; South Pointe High, Rock Hill Three; Pine Street Elementary, Spartanburg Seven; Wilder Elementary, Sumter 17; and Brushy Creek Elementary, Taylors Elementary, and Wade Hampton High in Greenville County. The Riley award recognizes school improvement councils for outstanding achievement and civic engagement on behalf of their school. The winner will be announced on March 10. For more information about the award process contact Cassie Barber, 803-777-7658, or visit:

www.ed.sc.edu/sic

2007 Secondary Principals of the Year announced

Two outstanding administrators have been named by the South Carolina Association of School Administrators as Secondary Level Principal and Assistant Principal of the Year. Creig Tyler of Lexington High School in Lexington School District One has been named the secondary principal of the year, and Lori Marrero of Richland Northeast High School in Richland School District Two has been recognized as the secondary assistant principal of the year. Both will compete for national honors and will be honored at the NASSP national convention. For more information about these awards, visit:

www.scasa.org

January is School Board Recognition month

January is School Board Recognition Month. The observance focuses attention on the vital role these elected or appointed public officials play in the education of our children. This year's theme is "School Boards: Leading Voices for South Carolina Public Schools." For recognition ideas, contact Debbie Elmore (delmore@scsba.org) at 800-326-3679.

Passports requirements extended

Students, teachers, and chaperones traveling by air will be required to carry a valid U.S. passport to reenter the United States starting January. 8, 2007, according to a new regulation issued by the U.S. Departments of Homeland Security and State. The plan, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), adds Mexico, Canada, the Caribbean, and

Bermuda to locations requiring a passport or selected other documents. Information about obtaining passports can be found by calling the National Passport Information Center at 877-487-2778 or by visiting:

<http://www.state.gov>

South Carolina Assistive Technology Expo 2007 set

The South Carolina Assistive Technology Expo 2007 will be held Thursday, March 29, 2007, from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. This event will include exhibits and workshops about the latest assistive technology for people with disabilities and age-related limitations. It is free and open to the public, and no pre-registration is necessary. To make suggestions and for more information, contact Mary Alice Bechtler (maryab@cdd.sc.edu) or Janet Jendron (jjendron@usit.net) or visit:

<http://www.sc.edu/scatp/atexpo07.html>

Aikens are featured in Bell-South African American history calendar

Charles and Valerie Aiken, owners of the only African American licensed, Medicare-certified home health agency in South Carolina, are the embodiment of strong family values and dedicated service to the community. Their 20-year career in home health care services includes seven offices in South Carolina and one in Augusta, Georgia. To read more about the Aikens, visit

<http://www.scafricanamericanhistory.com/currenthonoree.asp?month=1&year=2007>

EDUCATOR OPPORTUNITIES

Darlington district offers National Board Certification workshop

The Darlington County School District is offering a National Board Certification workshop on January 20 from 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at Hartsville High School. First-time candidates, bankers and potential candidates are encouraged to participate. Sessions will be conducted by Darlington County's National Board Certified teachers. The registration deadline is January 15. For more information, contact Wardie Sanders (wardies@darlington.k12.sc.us).

Palmetto Teachers Association sponsoring National Board Bankers seminar

The Palmetto State Teachers Association is sponsoring a National Board Bankers Seminar on Saturday, January 27 in Columbia from 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. The registration fee is \$30 for PSTA members and \$60 for nonmembers, including lunch. For more information or to register, contact Bev Barbee (bevbarbee@palmettoteachers.org) at 803.256.20651. To register, go to:

<http://palmettoteachers.org>

University of Iowa offers special graduate assistantships

The College of Education at the University of Iowa has special assistantships in education available to persons wanting to pursue graduate degrees in several fields of study. The stipends are \$16,730. The deadline is March 2, 2007. For more information, write: Chair, SGA Selection Committee, University of Iowa, 340 Lindquist Center, Iowa City, IA 52242-1529.

EDUCATOR RESOURCES

U.S. Education Department offers CD-ROM

The U.S. Department of Education and the Secret Service have released another tool to improve school safety, an interactive CD-ROM titled "A Safe School and Threat Assessment Experience: Scenarios Exploring the Findings of the Safe School Initiative (SSI)." For more information, visit:

http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac_ssi.shtml

To order copies, visit:

<http://www.edpubs.org/>.

Object of History is teacher resource

Each month The Object of History features an artifact from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History's collections related to a major topic in U.S. history. The site includes curriculum materials and opportunities for students to participate in live online forums with Smithsonian curators and historians. Teacher materials include lesson plans and other resources to support instruction. For more information, e-mail teachers@objectofhistory.org or visit:

<http://objectofhistory.org/>

AWARD PROGRAMS

Applications accepted for National School and Business Partnerships Awards

The National School and Business Partnerships Awards, created by the Council for Corporate and School Partnerships, recognize exemplary school-business partnerships that improve the academic, social, or physical well-being of students. Partnerships involving public schools and/or districts and businesses are eligible to apply. Six awards of \$10,000 each will be made. Applications are due by January 30. For more information, visit:

<http://www.corpschoolpartners.org/award.shtml>

Schools can apply for National School Change awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the Eighth Annual National School Change Awards, conducted by the American Association of School Administrators and the Fordham University Graduate School of Education. Applicants measure themselves against 16 criteria, and winners receive a \$5,000 grant. Schools can nominate themselves. Materials must be received by March 19. For more information, go to:

<http://www.npli.org/nsca/>

Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award accepting applications

The Astronauts Memorial Foundation Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award rewards excellence in the development and delivery of technology programs in the classroom with students or in the professional development of teachers. Educators in grades K-12 and district-level personnel are eligible to apply. The deadline is January 31. For more information, go to:

http://www.amfcse.org/Alan%20Shepard%20Award/alan_shepard_award.htm

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

The State Department of Education and ETV present a special two-hour program to assist students and parents in looking for ways to pay for a college education. "Finding Money for College" airs January 28, 5:30-7:30 p.m., live on all ETV channels. The program will repeat February 16, 3 a.m. -5 a.m. ETV open circuit repeats will air February 1, 2, 9, and 16, from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. on Channel 301. Viewers from across the state are invited to call-in questions to these expert financial aid professionals during the live broadcast. A toll-free number will be announced on air.

WWII Museum opens contests to students

Information about the National WWII Museum's 2007 High School On-Line Student Essay Contest and 2007 Middle School Art Contest are on-line. The essay contest is inspired by the special exhibit Anne Frank: A History for Today, which will be on display at the museum this spring. The Museum's Middle School Art Contest is open to students in grades 5-8. Art contest participants must create an original piece of art based in part by the history of WWII. For more information, go to:

www.nationalww2museum.org/education/studentessays.html

www.nationalww2museum.org/education/artcontest.html

Princeton University holding summer journalism program

Students who will be high school juniors and seniors next fall are invited to get a taste of what university life is like at Princeton University this summer. The ten day all-expenses-paid summer journalism program will be held in August for students from under-resourced financial backgrounds. Applications must be postmarked by February 15. Application materials are available at:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~sjp/>

International poetry and art contest open

River of Words, an international poetry and art contest focusing on watersheds, is open to students ages five to 19. The competition is designed to help youth explore the natural and cultural history of the place in which they live, and to express, through poetry and art, what they discover. The deadline for entries for River of Words is February 15. Students may enter on their own or as part of a group. For more information, visit:

<http://www.riverofwords.org/>

<http://www.sccenterforthebook.org/>

Donate Life South Carolina sponsors poster contest

The Paula Moore Dillingham Memorial Poster Contest promotes organ and tissue donation in South Carolina. Sponsored by Donate Life South Carolina for elementary, middle, and high school students, the contest offers students and teachers a positive experience along with raising awareness about this issue. The deadline is March 2. For more information about the contest, including entry rules, call 877-277-4866, e-mail smcadams@donatelifesc.org, or visit:

<http://donatelifesc.org>

Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities offers several programs

The Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities offers several programs in creative writing, drama, music, and visual arts. Offerings range from intensive two-week programs for rising ninth graders and tenth graders to a summer dance program and teacher institutes. For more information, e-mail admissions@scgsah.state.sc.us or visit:

<http://www.scgsah.state.sc.us/index.php>

This issue's quotation

"We'll take a grassroots approach to build support for a comprehensive plan that I believe can make us the fastest-improving, most innovative and most fairly funded public school system in the United States. That's what's necessary for South Carolina to address the challenges for success in the 21st Century." ~ Jim Rex, State Superintendent of Education

EdBlast! welcomes submissions

Do you need help in publicizing an education news item that would be of interest to a statewide audience? Send your information to jfairnot@ed.sc.gov or call Janice Larrymore Fairnot, EdBlast! editor, at 803-734-8999.

Spread the word about EdBlast!

We need your help in spreading the word about EdBlast!, the State Department of Education's e-newsletter. Here's the sign-up link:

<http://ed.sc.gov/tools/edblast/>

Thanks for sharing!